

FEB 17 1942

# The Elementary English Review

SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT

VOL. XIX

FEBRUARY 1942

No. 2

## SPECIAL NUMBER

### Spelling and Vocabulary

The Vocabulary and Spelling Errors of Second-Grade

Children's Themes ..... FRANCES BRITTAIR and  
JAMES A. FITZGERALD

The Young Child and Word Meanings ..... AGNES GUNDERSON

An Organismic Approach to Spelling ..... J. HAROLD STRAUB

The Fifth Graders Organize the School Library. CATHARINE D. CAREY

Vocabulary for Arithmetic in the Elementary  
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Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English,  
1941 ..... MARGARET HAMPTEL

Bodily Activity and Creative Dramatics ..... LUCILE S. MAIER

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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

Detroit, Michigan

J. L. CERTAIN, *Editor*

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Monthly from October through May

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# The Elementary English Review

Established, 1924, by C. C. Certain

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VOL. XIX

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of eight issues

Published  
1941  
January, February, March  
April, May, October  
November, December

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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW is published monthly from October to May at Detroit, Michigan. Subscription price \$2.50 per year; single copies 40 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single-copy rate. Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoan Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. Postage is charged extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscription (total \$2.74), on single copies 3 cents (total 43 cents). Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW in postal or express money orders or bank drafts. Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. All communications should be addressed to THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, Box 67, North End Station, Detroit, Michigan. Entered at the Post Office at Seymour, Ind., and at Detroit, Michigan, as second class matter.

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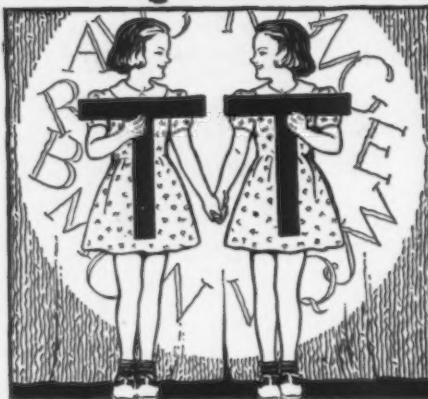
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## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

### The Vocabulary and Spelling Errors of Second-Grade Children's Themes

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THE WORDS which children use in writing and the mistakes which they make have been for several decades general problems of investigation.<sup>1</sup> As new problems developed, an increasing number of studies have been made. The more specific investigations have often yielded good results. Competent investigators have shown, however, that there is a considerable lack of agreement among some of the findings of the investigations of children's themes.<sup>2</sup>

Because of this lack of agreement in the findings, particularly of the word lists, there is still need for further investigations of child writing in school at various grade levels.

<sup>1</sup> McKee, Grace M., "The Vocabulary of Children's Themes." Unpublished Master's Thesis, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, H. Beatrice, "A Critical Evaluation of Investigations of Children's Writing Vocabularies." Unpublished Master's Thesis, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1926.

The purpose of this article is to report the findings of Brittain who sought to discover the most commonly used words in theme writing of second-grade children and to indicate the words of greatest spelling difficulty in these themes.

Brittain<sup>3</sup> collected approximately 200 themes from each of eighteen second-grade groups which included about 720 children's contributions. Approximately half, 1,729 of the themes obtained were directed; that is, they were written after preliminary discussion of the theme topics. The other half, 1,845, were written without teacher help of any kind.

These themes were written about many topics. Ninety-four different titles were counted in the 1,729 directed

<sup>3</sup> Brittain, Frances Josephine, "A Study of the Vocabulary Used and the Spelling Errors Made in Written Compositions of Second-Grade Children." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, 1938.

themes, and 202 in the 1,845 undirected themes. It may be that school influence had a tendency to limit the range of interests of the children. Not only did children show a wider range of interests in the undirected themes than in the directed themes, but they seemed to emphasize different interests in this kind of writing. Children wrote about a race, a sailboat, and a train more often in directed than in undirected themes. On the other hand they wrote in the undirected themes more often than in the directed ones about a pet squirrel, the assembly, mother, and helping someone.

The 3,574 themes yielded a grand total of 122,283 running words and 3,072 different words and expressions. In all, 14,953 spelling errors were recorded. After 397 proper nouns and expressions not recorded in a dictionary, which had been used 1,947 times and misspelled 597 times, were subtracted from the totals, the tabulation showed 2,675 different words and 14,346 spelling mistakes in a total of 120,336 running words.

It is interesting that the word *I* occurred 7,342 times and was misspelled 281 times, and that the one hundred most frequently used words were written 83,309 times, a percentage of 69.2 of the total, and were misspelled 5,994 times. The one hundred most frequently misspelled words were misspelled 6,921 times. The most frequently misspelled word, *too*, was written 825 times and missed 516 times.

Of this list of 2,675 words, 2,167 occur in Horn's ten thousand most commonly used words of adult writing<sup>4</sup>; 2,314 occur in Fitzgerald's 7,587 of child

<sup>4</sup> Horn, Ernest, *A Basic Writing Vocabulary*, State University of Iowa, Monographs in Education, No. 4, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Fitzgerald, James A., "The Vocabulary, Spelling Errors, and Situations of Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grade Children's Letters Written in Life Outside the School." Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1931.

letter writing<sup>5</sup>; 1,589 occur in one or more of the five investigations of children's themes as compiled by Breed<sup>6</sup>.

Table I presents a list of 810 words, whose frequency was greater than 9, with the frequency error in spelling for each word. These 810 words and their repetitions comprised 115,306 spellings, a percentage of 94.3 of the total number of running words used by the children in the study. These 810 words were misspelled 12,623 times of the total of 14,953 misspellings recorded in the 3,500 themes, a percentage of the total misspelling of 84.4.

Table I is read as follows: The word *a* was written 5,896 times and misspelled 28 times; the word *about* was written 73 times and misspelled 21 times, etc.

This vocabulary and error list should be of help to those whose aim it is to construct curriculums in both language and spelling.

TABLE I  
FREQUENCY OF USE AND FREQUENCY OF ERROR  
OF 810 SECOND-GRADE WORDS

Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error
<i>a</i>	5896	28
<i>about</i>	73	21
<i>after</i>	122	18
<i>afternoon</i>	19	5
<i>again</i>	64	26
<i>ago</i>	15	1
<i>air</i>	29	2
<i>airplane</i>	106	10
<i>airplanes</i>	11	2
<i>airport</i>	16	3
<i>all</i>	405	5
<i>almost</i>	28	3
<i>along</i>	17	4
<i>also</i>	15	2
<i>always</i>	74	31
<i>am</i>	291	31
<i>an</i>	160	37
<i>and</i>	4363	152
<i>animals</i>	22	10
<i>another</i>	54	23
<i>any</i>	29	6
<i>apple</i>	36	7
<i>apples</i>	37	24
<i>are</i>	401	35
<i>around</i>	37	12

<sup>6</sup> Breed, Frederick, S., *How to Teach Spelling*, F. A. Owen Publishing Company, Dansville, New York, 1930.

## THE VOCABULARY AND SPELLING ERRORS OF SECOND-GRADE

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Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error	Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error
arrow	13	4	broke	17	6
as	44	2	brother	247	44
asked	35	7	brothers	27	6
asleep	21	7	brought	111	46
assembly	47	22	brown	59	10
at	507	11	buggy	58	6
ate	54	5	built	11	6
aunt	83	34	bunny	91	7
aunt's	10	10	bus	17	1
auto	17	1	but	257	28
automobile	14	8	buttons	18	10
away	149	27	buy	43	20
babies	17	12	buys	22	3
baby	474	43	by	76	8
back	95	12	cake	111	8
bad	62	9	call	42	7
bag	13		called	51	11
bakery	14	1	came	211	26
ball	238	14	can	480	31
balloon	307	43	candy	192	8
balloons	27	6	can't	19	11
balls	30	5	car	171	8
barn	20	4	cards	12	1
basket	16	4	care	16	2
be	160	1	carries	37	29
beach	41	4	carrot	10	6
bear	46	4	carry	18	5
bears	20	1	cars	112	3
beautiful	10	6	cat	243	1
because	123	48	catch	27	14
bed	130	12	cats	21	3
been	13	3	caught	30	16
before	30	12	cents	23	13
began	12	5	chair	25	8
bell	38	6	chairs	21	1
bells	10	1	chicken	10	4
best	117	8	chickens	20	10
better	16	3	children	212	35
big	322	9	chimney	20	9
bird	95	14	Christmas	777	129
birdie	16	5	circus	11	6
birds	192	18	city	14	1
birthday	259	34	clean	50	19
bite	16	3	climb	16	8
black	133	20	clock	22	2
blew	10		clothes	40	16
blocks	11	1	coal	42	15
blue	148	18	coat	58	9
boat	61	7	coats	12	1
boats	13	6	cocoa	13	6
body	13		cold	66	5
bones	16	6	color	17	1
book	153	6	colored	16	3
books	59	2	colors	12	4
both	14	3	come	180	30
bottle	16	3	comes	152	29
bought	82	31	coming	61	31
bow	15		cook	13	1
box	29	4	cookies	32	5
boy	317	43	corn	28	4
boys	252	37	costume	23	4
brave	38		could	82	28
bread	22		country	62	16
breakfast	12	8	cousin	61	35
bright	17	5	cousins	29	12
bring	54	7	cow	36	2
brings	93	14	cowboy	11	1
			cows	56	15

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Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error	Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error
cream	10	6	fast	78	1
cried	16	5	fat	21	
cry	21	6	father	376	57
cut	10	4	father's	19	18
cute	18	5	favorite	34	10
daddy	33	4	feed	81	5
dance	10	1	feeding	53	10
dark	10	2	feet	15	5
day	475	21	fell	31	4
days	33	2	field	10	5
dear	26		fight	16	7
December	14	6	find	22	6
desk	17	1	fine	16	3
did	175	7	fire	141	9
didn't	33	26	first	58	20
dig	10		fish	105	19
dinner	93	10	fishing	30	11
dishes	51	23	five	52	20
do	461	15	flag	29	2
does	47	13	flew	22	6
dog	936	52	flies	18	12
dog's	23	23	floor	12	3
dogs	80	11	flower	10	
doll	774	10	flowers	68	18
dolls	123	12	fly	68	5
dolly	25	2	food	56	3
done	17	7	fools	15	1
don't	69	36	football	52	5
door	46	3	for	667	44
doors	12	2	found	38	15
down	200	60	four	52	18
draw	14	4	fox	10	2
dress	181	26	Friday	12	3
dressed	33	26	friend	95	39
dresses	21	6	friends	65	25
drill	22	5	from	140	29
drink	22	10	front	17	3
drinks	11	2	full	21	5
drum	22	2	fun	312	37
duck	11	1	funny	68	9
dust	23	3	fur	22	5
each	21	2	game	79	8
Easter	176	38	games	140	27
eat	167	5	garden	70	26
eats	37	8	gave	171	10
eggs	72	17	get	271	23
eight	46	11	gets	21	9
electric	18	3	getting	13	8
elephant	27	5	giant	23	
end	32	2	gift	12	3
engine	36	9	gifts	15	2
eve	19	2	girl	305	17
even	13	1	girls	203	28
ever	26	5	give	115	10
every	325	67	gives	75	16
everybody	20	8	glad	38	4
everything	13	4	glass	14	
eye	12	2	go	752	11
eyes	98	11	goes	137	73
face	11	1	going	290	27
fairies	14	14	gold	14	1
fairy	111	18	gone	23	8
fall	27	4	good	563	36
far	23	1	good-by	20	1
farm	-	141	got	474	32
farmer	35	28	grandfather	11	1
farmers	25	16	grandmother	43	18
		11	grandmother's	16	14

## THE VOCABULARY AND SPELLING ERRORS OF SECOND-GRADE

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Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error	Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error
grandpa	13	5	its	29	1
grass	17	7	jack-o-lantern	12	4
green	82	4	joke	46	9
ground	19	6	jolly	45	2
grow	34	6	jump	76	14
gym	31	13	jumped	13	6
had	528	38	jumping	23	5
ha-ha	16	1	jumps	15	5
hair	74	7	just	40	5
hall	15	4	keep	12	3
Halloween	133	25	kill	10	2
hand	23	1	killed	27	14
hands	15	1	kind	.38	5
hang	10	3	kinds	17	5
happily	25	2	kiss	10	2
happy	96	8	kite	.89	9
hard	23	3	kitten	39	3
hare	14		kittens	22	1
has	631	44	knew	13	4
hat	84	2	know	64	23
hats	15		ladder	11	3
have	1588	108	lady	26	6
hay	11	1	lake	134	3
he	1608	109	land	20	
head	34	4	last	122	10
heard	17	9	late	11	1
help	82	7	laughed	24	14
helped	25	5	leaves	52	17
helping	30	1	left	16	1
her	732	23	legs	11	2
here	46	9	let	43	7
hide	26	8	lets	13	4
high	19	7	let's	10	9
hill	35	5	letter	13	
him	468	71	letters	15	4
himself	13	5	librarian	10	7
his	425	44	library	53	3
hit	21	3	light	19	5
hole	11	5	lights	12	3
home	320	28	like	1784	108
homes	40		liked	89	19
hop	23	2	likes	415	116
hope	25	11	line	20	2
horn	10	2	lion	18	5
horse	40	4	little	607	37
horses	28	9	live	72	8
hot	12		lived	45	9
house	437	46	lives	32	9
houses	16	5	long	85	10
how	71	2	look	42	4
howling	69	13	looked	37	12
hundred	37	29	looking	17	
hunting	27	2	looks	20	2
hurt	28	4	lost	32	2
I	7342	281	lot	122	16
ice	115	2	lots	194	40
ice cream	54	6	love	130	14
if	69	6	loves	25	5
I'll	18	15	lunch	33	7
I'm	36	25	mad	13	1
in	1868	34	made	178	37
Indian	70	12	mail	16	2
Indians	26	9	make	263	39
into	40	4	makes	47	13
invited	23	7	making	28	13
is	2255	31	mama	15	4
it	1724	64	man	275	16
it's	25	20	many	65	11

## THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error	Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error
marbles	13	4	others	18	7
March	10	2	our	319	70
may	20	2	out	305	19
maybe	15	4	outside	38	3
me	1083	67	over	74	6
meat	17	5	packages	15	3
men	41	4	pair	38	13
merry	24	8	pal	17	14
met	20	3	pants	10	3
middle	12	5	paper	30	9
milk	148	14	parade	31	5
milked	12	5	park	68	6
milkweed	15	1	parts	15	5
milkweeds	36	4	party	293	32
mine	13	37	pass	13	3
Miss	34	13	peas	10	
mittens	10	2	penny	12	4
Monday	14	6	people	69	35
money	11	5	pet	255	11
more	71	8	pets	10	1
morning	89	37	pick	21	1
most	17	2	picnic	19	5
mother	54	51	picture	15	7
mother's	24	23	pictures	10	4
motor	10	3	pie	10	2
mouse*	110	26	piece	12	7
mouth	48	21	pigs	28	
Mr.	37	1	pine	13	
Mrs.	17	1	pink	40	1
much	298	37	pipe	18	2
must	15	4	plant	43	7
my	4259	202	plants	34	6
myself	17	5	play	1028	69
name	404	58	played	165	41
named	45	13	playing	210	28
names	41	3	plays	108	37
naughty	19	2	policeman	18	7
near	20	3	pond	11	6
neck	10	2	pony	35	7
nest	16	1	poor	30	
never	33	8	pop	15	3
new	343	23	postman	12	
next	48	7	present	12	7
nice	313	36	presents	63	17
night	142	14	pretty	189	67
nine	16	4	prize	21	5
no	84	2	prizes	11	2
noise	19	9	program	12	1
north	24		pull	25	4
nose	52	6	pulled	10	7
not	251	15	pulls	23	5
now	83	12	puppies	32	24
numbers	15	5	puppy	11	6
nurse	14	3	put	215	19
nuts	49	6	puts	10	
o'clock	38	21	rabbit	54	14
of	867	28	rabbits	42	18
off	40	12	race	197	9
oh	30	6	races	10	1
old	116		radio	10	4
on	1131	53	rain	11	
once	185	40	ran	77	16
one	772	85	rang	11	4
ones	17	2	rat	19	
only	33	10	read	68	10
or	39	2	real	29	3
other	137	22	recess	96	15
			red	207	11

\* The word *Mickey* recorded among proper nouns, occurred 105 times and was misspelled 28 times.

## THE VOCABULARY AND SPELLING ERRORS OF SECOND-GRADE

49

Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error	Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error
ride	141	19	snowballs	51	16
rides	23	3	snowing	10	1
riding	20	5	snowman	357	60
right	20	1	snowmen	23	13
ring	19	1	snows	15	2
rings	19	9	so	334	8
rode	17	10	soldiers	19	6
roll	39	4	some	497	83
rolled	14	5	something	19	6
room	85	11	sometimes	157	69
roots	15	4	song	23	2
rope	27	3	songs	16	4
round	28	9	soon	44	5
run	134	15	south	22	1
running	10	6	spelling	31	7
runs	25	6	spring	34	3
said	381	43	squirrel	66	25
sailboat	52	4	stage	12	
same	25		started	15	6
sand	28		station	11	2
sang	40	6	stay	21	2
Santa Claus	383	75	stayed	12	7
sat	17		steam	20	5
Saturday	236	48	stem	16	3
saw	324	67	stick	24	2
say	40	3	sticks	11	5
says	28	7	still	10	2
scared	17	12	stockings	29	14
school	402	57	stood	10	3
see	254	5	stop	12	4
seed	23		stopped	10	6
seeds	58	7	store	134	37
seen	11		stories	21	13
send	13	2	story	118	14
set	48	4	stove	11	
seven	48	17	street	161	15
sewing	11	2	suet	12	2
shall	10	3	sugar	49	4
she	927	30	suit	41	9
shoes	23	5	summer	205	42
shooting	33	3	sun	51	5
shop	11		Sunday	42	19
shopping	10	7	supper	18	4
should	15	7	swim	24	6
show	119	18	swimming	49	45
sick	14	3	table	98	14
side	16	2	tail	28	4
sing	73	14	take	137	12
singing	59	6	takes	29	8
sister	278	25	talk	21	4
sisters	27	7	teacher	101	38
sit	32	7	teachers	11	2
sits	11	4	teaches	11	6
sitting	11	5	tell	35	6
six	32	8	tells	12	2
skates	24	11	ten	51	15
skating	21	8	than	25	9
sky	16	2	thank	38	12
sled	100	17	Thanksgiving	156	48
sleds	17	1	that	306	23
sleep	61	7	that's	19	16
sleeps	13	3	the	5655	144
sleigh	11	5	their	172	131
slide	16	3	them	242	44
small	18	3	then	380	71
snake	10		there	432	102
snow	520	37	they	582	140
snowball	34	10	thing	22	

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Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error	Word	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Error
things	85	27	wanted	54	12
think	36	16	wants	27	11
thirty	12	10	warm	25	7
this	91	8	was	1108	101
three	92	30	wash	25	11
threw	23	20	watch	23	8
through	11	8	water	103	17
throw	25	12	way	47	1
time	358	65	we	1916	174
times	10		wear	25	8
to	3104	54	wears	12	3
today	67	8	week	29	3
together	26	8	well	12	1
told	67	2	went	739	132
too	825	516	were	264	61
took	95	12	what	118	29
top	44	3	when	717	169
town	35	6	where	41	10
toy	74	6	while	17	5
toys	336	34	white	160	42
tracks	10	3	who	55	10
train	311	59	whole	12	5
trains	15	3	why	21	1
travel	11		wigwam	10	1
tree	204	6	wild	11	5
trees	32	3	will	328	21
tricks	37	6	wind	25	2
tried	11	7	window	18	9
trip	10	2	windows	17	10
truck	17	2	windy	10	2
trunk	12	3	wings	17	3
tumbleweed	18	6	winter	122	11
turkey	98	27	wish	32	6
turn	11	6	witch	10	1
twelve	15	13	with	980	190
twenty	30	25	woman	11	8
two	195	84	won	87	24
typewriter	11	5	wood	14	2
uncle	32	19	wooden	16	1
under	20	7	woods	31	3
until	24	15	work	55	21
up	313	25	workshop	13	2
upon	42	20	worms	17	8
upstairs	15	4	would	64	26
us	197	19	write	50	15
used	12	11	yard	48	14
vacation	134	21	year	94	11
valentine	20	4	years	48	9
very	619	50	yellow	61	10
visit	11	1	yes	64	1
wagon	70	18	yesterday	31	9
walk	56	6	you	646	55
walking	19	6	your	75	9
want	111	26	zoo	16	1

# The Young Child and Word Meanings

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**W**HAT IS THE area of a child's knowledge or understanding of words that are used frequently in daily speech, oral and written—words such as *happy*, *kind*, *quiet*, *noisy*, etc.? With what words does he express his understanding of such abstract qualities as kindness, quietness, and happiness? In their art work children speak of warm and cool colors; what vocabulary do they use to convey the idea of warmth and coolness? An attempt to answer these questions was the motive for a study carried out with a group of twenty-one children during the spring term of their second year in school (grade two) at the University of Wyoming.

The teacher introduced the work as follows: "Let's play a game with words. Do you know any 'happy' words? What words could we use instead of the word *happy*? What words mean the same as *happy*?" Responses came thick and fast; the teacher had to jot down abbreviated forms at times in order to keep up with the flow of ideas.

After a list of *kind* words had been made one of the children said, "Let's think of *cross* words." A list of "scary" words was also requested. Red and blue are the favorite colors of these children, therefore these, with *black* and *white*, were the color words chosen for the vocabulary games. Because it was expected that the children would give word associations rather than synonyms for *Sunday* and *kitchen*, the game was played with these words also. The expectation proved

true. In looking over the list of *Sunday* words only one synonym, *holiday*, is found. While this is less than in some of the other lists, it is not significantly so and only emphasizes the conclusion reached in the study that for young children, words have associations rather than generalized meanings.

It is interesting to note that *Mother* is listed as a *kitchen* word; when questioned why he would list it as such the child replied, "My mother makes things in the kitchen." In like manner a child justified listing *America* as a *happy* word by saying, "America is a happy land; there is no war here."

The variety of responses indicates that seven-year-olds are original in their thinking and do not employ a common criteria for judging and classifying words. Another instance verifies this: One child listed *dungeon* as a "scary" word; another thought *dungeon* a "pretty" word. When challenged, he replied, "It is pretty to me." Is not this another illustration showing that words become meaningful only through many associations? This child may have had pleasant (but certainly limited) experiences with the word *dungeon*. Perhaps a certain room—say a playroom—may have been called a *dungeon*, or he may like certain stories which feature *dungeons*.

Other *pretty* words given were: tree, bluebells, stream, hillsides, waterfall, rock garden, pearls, fairies, princess, king, queen, queen's cave, Golden Goose, birthday, Christmas, Christ-Child, Easter, Thanksgiving, George Washington, Lin-

coln, valentine, grocery, good food. It is interesting to note the sources of these words. Some are of folk and fairy tale acquaintance; others signify beauties of nature; while to the gourmet and the child, *grocery*, no doubt, is a word of beauty.

Do young children see beauty in words? Why do they like Kipling's *Just So Stories*? Without a doubt it is not the plot alone but also such intriguing phrases as "the great, grey, green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever trees," "satisfiable curiosity," and others, that account for the oft repeated request: "Please read *The Elephant's Child*." The fact that these children think of characters found in literature as "pretty" words suggests that they have some appreciation of literature.

That words convey attitudes and emotions was clearly evident when giving "scary" words. Excitement, or, shall we say, a shivery feeling like that evoked by "spooky" Halloween stories and games, was seen in the group and brought forth the comment, "I think scary words are fun, but it makes me sort of scared."

Young children tend to associate particular situations with abstract qualities expressed by such words as happy, kind, etc. Such words seem to recall specific experiences, but have not yet become symbols of meaning for the seven-year-old. The following summary of the lists corroborates this statement:

Words	Number of Associations	Number of Synonyms
happy	97	7
scary	66	2
noisy	52	2
kitchen	50	
warm	45	3
cool	46	1
red	36	1
white	35	
kind	31	4
Sunday	31	1
cross	23	5
quiet	18	
black	21	
blue	12	

It would be interesting to continue similar studies at each age or grade level to determine, if possible, at what age general meanings (expressed by synonyms) tend to replace specific situations or ideas.

The incident of the word *dungeon* raises a question. Is there a danger that the adult tends to impose upon children his understanding of words rather than to let them arrive at more general and accurate meanings through manifold experiences with words? It is frequently said, "Children lose their spontaneity and originality of expression as they grow older." Need this be so? Might this quality be retained if adults conceded to children greater respect and tolerance for their interpretation of words, contenting themselves with the knowledge that maturity of expression and preciseness of meaning come through wide reading and much hearing of good literature?

Do we grant the child as much freedom in expressing himself through words as through the brush and palette? Should we be as liberal in allowing individual standards of beauty in the field of language as we are in the fields of art and music?

Teachers in the intermediate grades have long accepted the responsibility of building a meaningful vocabulary; possibly teachers in the primary grades might do more than they have been doing particularly in oral language. Needless to say, any plan for developing and extending a meaningful vocabulary must provide the child with opportunities to hear and read good literature. With the current emphasis on social studies and science in the elementary school it is more than ever important that the teacher keep a watchful eye on the daily program lest literature for appreciation be crowded out of an already filled curriculum.

If children in the primary grades and on, could be given an interest in and a feeling for words, might we not have more effective and picturesque speech in our daily lives?

**Happy**

airplane, America, April Fool's Day, art  
 banjo, baseball (game), basketball, beautiful, birds, bird houses, birds' nest, birthday  
 cake, calendar (new), candy, carnival, cheerful\*, chickens, Christmas, circus, concert, cookies, country deer hunting, delightful\*, dyeing Easter eggs  
 Easter  
 fidgety (eager), fishing, flowers, football (game), funny  
 garden, gay\*, giggle, glad\*, going places, green grass halibut, Halloween, hunting  
 ice cream, Independence Day  
 jolly\*, jumping up and down  
 kites  
 laugh, love  
 matinees, Maybaskets, merry\*, milk, Monday (school), moon, music, musician  
 new books, new clothes, new shoes, nice\*  
 orchards  
 painting, parade, parties, pets, picnics, picking berries, pinnafores, plants, playhouse, playing, program  
 rain, reading, recital, riding horses, riding in car  
 Santa Claus, shows, sing, skating, skiing, sleepy, smile, snow man, snowy day, spring, spring festival, stars, stories, sun, Sunday, summer, swimming  
 tap dancing, Thanksgiving, toasting marshmallows, toasting wieners, toys, trees, turkey  
 vacation  
 winter, wonderful

**Kind**

America  
 beautiful, "bless you"  
 Christmas  
 diamond  
 gave, gentle\*, give, glad, God, gold  
 happy, happiness, hug  
 Jesus  
 kiss  
 love  
 money  
 nice\*  
 please, present (gift), pretty, purr  
 ring, romance  
 silk, silver, smile, soft, Star Spangled Banner, sweet  
 "Thank you," thoughtful  
 useful  
 velvet

**Cross**

angry\*  
 bang, bossy, broke (broke it)  
 crazy, cry  
 gnash teeth  
 hate\*, hit, horrid  
 "I'd-like-to-murder-you"  
 kick, knock-down  
 mad\*, mean\*  
 naughty  
 ornery\*  
 pinch, pull hair  
 \*Synonym

sassy, slam, slap, "sock you," spank, stamp (feet)  
 talk back, throw rocks  
 use fists

**Scary**

bats, bloody, bogeyman, bombs, bow and arrows, bull, bullet  
 candle goes out, cannon ball, cave, condemned house, creaky, cross  
 dagger, dark, dead, deep dark hole, devil, dragon, drunk man, dungeon, dynamite  
 fierce\*, fiery eyes, fire, footsteps  
 ghost, giants, goblin, gorilla, gun  
 Halloween, haunted\*, high voltage, hobgoblins, hole, house on fire  
 Indians  
 kill, knives  
 lightning, lion, lizards  
 mad, madman, mask, mummy, murder  
 nightmare, noises  
 owl  
 scarecrow, screams, shadows, skeleton, skyrocket, snake, spears, swords  
 thieves, thunder, time bomb, torch  
 war, wild, witch, wolf  
 yell

**Quiet**

calm\*, church, cotton, creep, crepe soles  
 deaf, death  
 graveyard  
 late at night, library, lonely\*  
 mice  
 night  
 peace\*, prairie,  
 reading, resting, robbers  
 silence\*, show, (movie), sleep, Sunday

**Noisy**

airplane, airplane crash  
 baby crying, boat whistle, bomb, buildings fall down  
 cannon, caps (cap gun), carnival, chattering, chicks, circus, city, clap hands, commotion\*  
 dam, depot, dynamite  
 excitement\*  
 fighting\*, fire-engine bell, fire-engine siren, fire-drill bell  
 grenade (hand), gun  
 hail, hammer, highway, holler, horses running  
 July Fourth  
 machines, machine shop, Model T Ford; music  
 nitro-glycerine  
 pen scratching, pop guns  
 rattle snake  
 saxophone, scream, snore, stamping  
 threshing, thunder, train, tramping, truck  
 war, whistle, wind, wreck  
 yell  
 zoo

**Cool**

air  
 baths, blizzard, blue, Br-r-r  
 cold\*, cold bath, cooler (noun)  
 draught, dripping, dry ice  
 Eskimos  
 grass after rain, green  
 hail  
 ice, ice cubes, ice pack  
 moon, mud

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night, north, North Pole  
 pink  
 rain, rain coat, refrigerator  
 sand, shade, shiver, slush, snow, south, South Pole,  
 storm, sun suits, swimming, swim suits  
 umbrella  
 wading, water, wet, white, wind, winter  
 yellow

## Warm

ash pit  
 bed, black, blanket, boiling\*, brown, burning\*  
 candle, chimney, cocoa, coffee, covers (bed), cozy  
 desert  
 exhaust (car),  
 fire, fire place, furnace  
 gun smoke  
 heater, heating pad, hot\*, hot tar, hot water, hot  
 water bottle, hot water tank  
 light, lightning  
 melting wax, mustard plaster  
 oven  
 pepper, perspire  
 radiator, red hot, register  
 sheepskin, spring, steam, stove, summer, sun, sun-  
 burn, sweat  
 tamales, tea  
 wool, wraps

## Kitchen

bread box, broom closet  
 cabinet, cake dishes, calendar, canned fruit, can  
 opener, cans, cat (under stove), cat's table, cellar door,  
 clock, cooking utensils, crackers, cupboards  
 dishes, dish cloth, dish pan, dog (under stove)  
 electric beater, electric mixer  
 flour, flour bin, food  
 garbage can  
 ice box  
 kitchen curtains  
 linoleum  
 mother  
 nice and cozy  
 oven  
 pantry, pop bottles, pots and pans  
 recipes, refrigerator, rolling pin  
 salt and pepper, sauce pan, shelf, silverware, sink,  
 smells (baking), sugar bin, stove  
 table, tablecloth, tea towels  
 waste paper basket

## Sunday

best clothes, Bible, blessing  
 choir, church, cookies  
 dean (clergy), Denver Post (newspaper), dessert  
 Easter  
 Father (priest), funny papers  
 good food, good time, go to ranch  
 holiday, hymns  
 minister  
 pick flowers, picnics, plant garden, prayer, prayer  
 book  
 rest, riding in car  
 shows, skiing, stores are closed, Sunday dinner, Sun-  
 day papers, Sunday school  
 trips

## White

bread (inside), bath tub  
 chalk, clouds, cold cream, cotton  
 day

eggs  
 flour  
 geese, glass  
 hair (white), hospital (inside)  
 marshmallows, milk, moon  
 paper, paste, person, pillow, powder  
 radishes  
 salt, sheets, sink (kitchen), snow, soap, stars, stars  
 in flag, steam, stripes in flag, swan  
 teeth  
 wash basin

## Black

ant  
 blackboard, bugs  
 cinders, coal, coffee  
 engine  
 hair, hearse  
 ink  
 nigger, night  
 oil  
 pickaninny, print  
 rails (railroad)  
 shoes, smoke, soot  
 tar, trains

## Red

apples  
 beets, blood  
 cardinal, cherries, Christmas, crabs, currant  
 fire, fire-chief's car, fire-engine, fingernail polish  
 Indians  
 jelly  
 lips, lipstick  
 mercurochrome, mouth  
 radish, raw meat, red bird, red hair, "red head,"  
 Robin Redbreast, rose, rouge, ruby  
 scarlet\*, sparks, strawberries, stripes in flag  
 tomato, tongue, tulip  
 war paint, weiners, woodpeckers

## Blue

bluebird, blue jay  
 eyes  
 field in flag  
 grapes  
 lilac  
 morning glory  
 ocean, overalls  
 sky  
 turquoise  
 water

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# An Organismic Approach to Spelling

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ONE OF THE fundamental concepts of the organic design of education suggests that all development progresses from the vague to the specific, from the general to the particular, from the whole to the part.

In the light of this thesis, and in relation to spelling, it would be well here to see whether the teaching of spelling in our schools today tends to incorporate this thesis in its fundamental procedures. Investigations of the writer indicate that spelling procedures now being used are generally exactly the opposite, progressing from the part to the whole, and not from the whole to the part.

*Reading and spelling.* Let us look to a comparison of the methods and procedures now in use in the teaching of reading as compared with those now being used in the teaching of spelling. The comparison clearly indicates that reading method follows the organic design, progressing from the whole to the part; but that spelling method follows the atomistic design, progressing from the part to the whole. These procedures are, then, exact opposites. Hence, everything that may be said in defense of our present-day reading method definitely defeats what may be said in defense of spelling method, and vice versa; one or the other is wrong. They both cannot be right if we accept the same thesis for guidance throughout our total educational program. Educational procedure must be consistent.

*Spelling procedure must change.* It appears, therefore, that the teacher of spelling must soon entirely change his teaching procedures, and that he must entirely change his fundamental thinking. He must not, and cannot, begin his spelling teaching with letters, and progress to combinations of letters or phonetic elements, then to words, to phrases, to sentences, and to larger wholes. Think for the moment of the accepted procedure in the teaching of reading. It is from whole to part.

*Meaning should come first.* Unfortunately, the practice from part to whole is common spelling method. Moreover, as the child reaches the achievement of spelling the whole word, he generally looks up the meaning of this word for use in a sentence. Note how meaning here is a mere follow-up of the process. Recall, too, that meaning is known to be the most important element in the process. Recall, also, that meaning makes for learning, and that it is highly probable that isolated words will not make meaning. Therefore, in the case of spelling, as in every other case, meaning should come first. The child should progress from here on down to the more specific elements, and finally to the mechanics of calling the letters in order. This reversal of the accepted method is true of many phases of spelling; not merely of the mechanics. Meaning in spelling is following the part to whole process. I repeat, think of our accepted reading procedure in terms of meaning,

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and spelling in terms of meaning. Here we have opposites.

The reader may reply that spelling has been taught by an atomistic method for years, and successfully so, too. Then why all this question now? True enough; children have learned to spell in the past. But how do we know that they learned in atomistic progression? The writer is inclined to believe that, even in yester-year, children learned to spell in organismic progression, not atomistic. Children learned to spell "in-spite-of" the teaching and method rather than "as-a-result-of" the teaching and method. The child who possessed the ability to set for himself the necessary spelling goals, and who had the ability to get over the hurdles, was the child who learned to spell. But the child lacking goals, directed maturation, and insight of his own failed and fell by the way-side.

*Spelling must be taught within wholes of experiences.* Spelling cannot, and must not, be taught in isolation from the larger experience whole, nor in isolation from life's whole experiences. The subject matter of spelling must, like all other subject matter, emerge with the unfolding of life's experiences.<sup>1</sup> Spelling must progress from the whole to the part. Meanings and relationships which serve as bases for new spelling words must be within the past total experience background of the child before he progresses in the direction of learning the more specific mechanics of spelling a word. Words finding no related meaning in the child's experiences cannot, and will not, be learned. Spelling is a part of the larger area of language arts. The mechanics of spelling might be thought of as a part of the reading process—that part which is more highly definite and specific

than phonics. Spelling-out words should come after phonics in the natural progress of the individual from the whole to the part; that is, when spelling is thought of as being a process of mechanical achievement. Spelling, like reading, like arithmetic, like honesty, like kindness, and like everything else must be taught in wholes of experiences, and not sectioned off into a spelling area, not to mention isolated lists of words.

*Spelling procedure must progress from the whole to the part.* But, how then, may one proceed with this suggested organismic approach to spelling? Get a thorough understanding and appreciation of the organismic philosophy. Compare this with your present methods and understandings. Make continued application of these procedures, both in and out of school. (This, of course, includes all of one's teaching.) Think in wholes. Work in wholes. Make experiences the vital classroom activities in and out of spelling teaching. Leave spelling words in context. Isolate words from context rarely, if ever. Be sure that words have meaning to the child. Yes, write stories, paragraphs, and groups of related sentences. Avoid writing lists of words, and un-related sentences. Work always with the whole unit, not with the parts.

Spelling lessons must be set up in wholes and worked with in wholes. A total experience field (including reading, spelling, composition, literature, and other related areas and activities) should be the child's first contact with spelling. Build meaning. Encourage relationships. Point relationships to past experiences. Work for understandings and appreciations. Keep the experience large enough to include all of the relationships that might emerge. Be slow to narrow the whole. Move from the whole to the part

<sup>1</sup> See J. Harold Straub—"The Emerging Design of the Elementary School Curriculum." *The National Elementary Principal*, October, 1940.

slowly, and be most careful not to narrow the whole beyond the possibility of learning. Few words, except, possibly, nouns, should appear in isolation.

*Spelling-out the word, or writing-out the word.* The mechanics of spelling-out the word, or writing-out the word should be the last process, not the first. It is wrong for children to spell the word first in letters, and then to look for meanings in the dictionary. In the dictionary the child will usually find several meanings for the one word, differing in thought. The child might easily, and very often will, choose the wrong meaning for his present purpose. He may try to attach several meanings to the present need with negative learning and confusion as the results. Where words have two or more meanings, these meanings should not be crossed in the thinking of the child. For example: the word "game" has several meanings ("game" meaning organized activity, "game" meaning wild animals, "game" meaning a score in tennis, possibly "game" in the sense of "a game leg," etc.). But, should the word "game" emerge in the child's experiences, one, and only one, should be discussed at the particular time. The other meanings of "game" should not be introduced at this point. The time for these is when they emerge in the child's experiences. Yes, older children with the necessary background of word meaning and word relationship, may possibly be exposed to more than one meaning at a time, but, here too, it is apt to confuse.

In the very same sense, it is poor procedure to introduce "to," "too," and "two" at the same sitting. Likewise, it is confusing and unnecessary to introduce, or expose the child to "there" and "their" at the same time. Such types are many and varied, but the point holds true in all cases. Let these words emerge, and don't

cross meanings unnecessarily. But this is English, flashes the reader. Fine! Teaching must not departmentalize in this fashion, lest real, lasting, and related learning be hindered in its natural progress in its natural environment.

It is likewise true that teachers should abandon the practice of teaching children to find the little words in big words. This tends to confuse and hinder progress. Negative relationships and meanings are built here, too. For example: the writer recalls listening to a first grade child do just exactly what the teacher had recommended, find the little word in the big word. He was attempting to read the word "this." And, after sizzling and stuttering a bit he said phonetically "th" followed by the word "is." This is so common and so wrong. Think for a minute of the "little words" in "there" (here-her), "that" (hat-at), etc.

*Tell the child the word immediately—don't let him guess.* In such a case whether in spelling or in reading, the teacher should have told the child the word immediately. She should not have allowed him to sizzle, guess, stutter, and confuse for even a moment, for in so doing the child learned negatively. (Children are learning all the time, and this learning may be either positive or negative.) But our even greater concern is that here the child probably lost the life-line of the learning, the total meaning. Hence what is to follow may lack learning possibility, and may result in nothing more than word calling. The teacher must never lose sight of the fact that meaning is by far the most important element in the learning process, and that it determines the quantity and quality of the learning. Hence, it behooves the teacher to help the child immediately instead of allowing him to stumble and flounder aimlessly. Yes, tell the child the word; tell it to him again; tell it to him the

third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and more times if necessary. But if this much repetition is necessary, it is evident that the first tellings were mere tellings and not learnings; hence, the fault is probably in the teaching, and not in the learning.

*Teach all words in meaningful relationships.* And this raises the question, how teach, or give meaning to words? As already suggested, there are many words that should never appear in isolation in a learning situation. In fact, possibly all but nouns fall into this class. And, too, it has been suggested that the teacher be most careful not to narrow the whole beyond the possibility of learning. For example, prepositions, pronouns (including the relative pronouns), adjectives, adverbs, should always be taught in context. Let us look at the teaching of the preposition, "to." "To" should be taught in the larger experience whole, and never

in a whole smaller than the phrase, for example, "to the house," "to the man." It is easily seen that "to" has little meaning outside some such whole. This is true of all words, but possibly to a lesser degree in the case of nouns.

*Spelling is an aspect of language arts.* And so, in conclusion, it appears to the writer that the teaching of spelling must greatly change its character and procedure; that spelling progress must be from the whole to the part; that spelling teaching may temporarily look to the design of the teaching of reading for guidance; that spelling's identity will eventually be absorbed by the larger whole, the language arts area which includes reading, spelling, composition, literature, and the like; and that spelling, too, must part ways with the atomistic grounding in favor of the organic approach.

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# The Fifth Graders Organize the School Library

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New York City.*

**I**N JUNE, the 5-A children were delighted when they were told that they had been chosen to organize the library in their new school building which would be ready in September. With much enthusiasm, blue prints were consulted and plans were made for the placing of book stacks, arrangement of sofas, upholstered chairs, footstools, tables, and reading lamps. Color schemes were discussed.

With September came reality; no books, no book-stacks, no furniture, only a library room; but enthusiasm was greater than ever! It would be fun to tell, years later, how this wonderful library began. The college library could spare some bookstacks. Books on the two upper shelves could not be reached even by the eighth-grade pupils. The child librarians were not disturbed. They decided to make dioramas to fill the top book shelves. The two art teachers and all the children in the school co-operated. Prune boxes were brought in. Scenes from *Red Riding Hood*, *Little Black Sambo*, *Mary Poppins*, *Pinocchio*, and others made the top shelves very attractive. The children decided to display, on some of the next-to-top shelves, posters made of paper book jackets, and large books opened to lovely illustrations.

Pupils of the school were asked to donate books that they had enjoyed reading. Members of the College Alumnae Association and college teachers were asked to contribute their treasured childhood classics. Books poured in. A book fund

of five hundred dollars was spent most wisely on beautiful, carefully chosen books. Some of these intended for the lower grade pupils proved attractive enough to be read by the upper grade students. One of them remarked, "They didn't have books like these when I was young!"

Four ancient tables and thirty-six stools were obtained. The pupil librarians weren't disturbed. They decided that perhaps it was just as well that they didn't have the comfortable and lovely furniture they had imagined in June. So many things had to be done to the many books that the library now had. They could concentrate upon preparing books for circulation.

How did it happen that these fifth graders had been chosen to organize the library? When they were in the fourth grade the school had been housed in temporary quarters. There was no school library; but in this classroom there was one steel cabinet six feet high with seven shelves, twelve by eighteen inches. Most of the children enjoyed reading books, and on Fridays they brought in their own books and exchanged them. The books weren't many. Several pupils had none to lend. Several pupils had some to lend, but weren't anxious to read those belonging to the other children. The teacher felt that all of them should be doing more reading.

She made some plans and discussed them with the librarian in charge of the children's room in the nearest branch of

the New York Public Library. This was eight blocks away from the school. The librarian agreed to issue library cards to those who wished them. The others, who didn't want cards but did want books, were to be allowed to borrow them on the teacher's card. Arrangements were made for a second visit so as to return the books. A third visit would depend upon the interest shown by the children.

When the children arrived for their first visit (the first visit to any library for twenty-one children), they were charmed with the hospitality of the head librarian and her two assistants. They admired the attractive room. They liked the pictures, plants, and flowers; but most of all they liked the books which the librarian had placed on the tables. Outdoor wraps were removed quickly. The children sat down and began to read. At the end of a half-hour, the librarian told them two delightful stories. The children then chose books to take back to school. Some asked for library cards. Neither the teacher nor the librarian tried to make the children take out books or cards; but the thirty-eight pupils chose sixty-two books to carry back to school.

Back in school, the principal came in to hear all about the visit. Enthusiasm was high. Arrangements were made for a second visit to take place four weeks later. The teacher found space in the lone cabinet for twenty books. The rest were taken home. Each borrower was to bring his book back when he had read it. Waiting lists were arranged for some books. The children were asked to report briefly on books they liked and would recommend. The teacher had brought back four books to be read by her to the class. Very often an impatient child would borrow the teacher's book over night or over the week-end, because he just couldn't wait to find out about the

end of the story. Books could always be taken from the shelves of the room "library" to be read in school.

From the very first visit to the public library, there was felt the need for careful organization to keep track of the books borrowed and read, so that it would always be known just who had each book. The teacher and the children kept these records.

When the time came for the second visit, the children began to ask if they could borrow books and arrange for another visit to return them. The children were delighted with the books that the librarians had placed on the tables—all different from the first visit. Two more stories charmed them. When leaving, several children told the librarians they would see them four weeks later at the same hour.

The class teacher and librarian made careful plans for the third visit. Each child was asked to bring his box of school crayons. An unpublished story was read to them. They were asked to illustrate the part they thought should have a colored illustration. In planning the fourth visit, the children felt so friendly toward the librarians that they asked if the librarians could help them choose the winners in their class poetry contest.

After the fourth visit, the teacher felt that much had been accomplished. Each child owned a library card and had used it at least once at his neighborhood branch library in addition to the class visits. The five children who enjoyed the visits to the library but didn't enjoy reading had read from two to five books, not counting the ones they had listened to when the teacher read them to the class.

The following semester, the children wanted to visit the library every two weeks, because they had discovered the value of the reference books that had to

be read in the library. The teacher explained that so many visits might overburden the librarians, unless the children wanted to help by learning about the arrangement of books and the use of the card catalogue. The next visit was given over to learning about these two features. The children took an intelligent interest. A child who lived near the branch library (our school draws children from all parts of New York City) volunteered to go to the library the day before the class visit to tell the librarian about the unit of work so that books on that subject would be on the table when we arrived. The one feature that was never omitted was the telling of a story. All of the librarians were excellent story tellers. The children were very responsive, and gathered around the story teller so quickly and quietly that they were usually told two stories. During all of the visits no child ever misbehaved.

Thus, through regular, well planned, and happy visits to the Public Library, the children had acquired the knowledge that they were now putting to use in organizing their own school library. Before anything was done to a single book, plans were made. These plans were discussed and evaluated. A college senior who had worked in the college library and in the public library came in to help the children. They appreciated and respected her knowledge of library work. They agreed that a book had to be prepared carefully and accurately for the shelves.

Careful plans were made by the children. Each child was to learn how to do everything that a library book required. The children were to work in groups. A child was to be in charge of each group. Difficulties that the group leader couldn't handle were to be discussed with the student-teacher librarian, and only brought to the class teacher as a last resort.

All of the children pasted card pockets in the books. These were pasted one inch from the bottom in the exact center of the back cover of the book. The need for careful pasting was realized by all the children when one group had pasted more pockets in less time than any other group had — by not measuring. The crooked, messy pasting and difficulties encountered when inserting cards in such pockets made the group willing and anxious to do the work over correctly.

All of the children who were good at penmanship helped to write two cards for each book (one to be kept in the library and one to be retained by the class teacher when a child borrowed a book.) Those children whose penmanship didn't please the committee practised and improved, so that all children wrote some book cards. It was wonderful to see the desire each child had to participate. There were no shirkers.

All of the children learned the main classes of the Dewey Decimal system. The numbers and letters to be placed on the back binding of the book were written in pencil on the inside of the back cover. Books that the children couldn't classify were set aside by them for the teacher or student-teacher to mark. All the lettering and numbering on the outside of the book was done by the children. The books requiring white ink were separated from those that required black ink. Some children did this printing so well that it was decided to let these experts do most of the "outside work" for the sake of uniformity. But every child had the satisfaction of lettering at least two books.

The phase of the work that the teacher expected the children to find an unpleasant task was the feature that the children enjoyed most—the lacquering of the binding. She found the odor unpleasant,

but the children didn't. The covers and bindings of all new books were lacquered. Only the back binding of old books was done. No book was lacquered until it had had a card pocket pasted in, two cards, and the correct numbers and letters printed on the back binding.

When the lacquer was dry, the book was ready to be catalogued. Two catalogue cards were made. The children wanted all of the catalogue cards typed. Their reasons were excellent. One consulted a card catalogue for information. One wanted to get this information quickly. Hand lettered or printed cards would be confusing. Typed cards would speed up the process. The children insisted that all catalogue cards had to be typed, even though only six students owned and knew how to use typewriters. The principal lent her personal typewriter. Six machines and six typists were used at the beginning. Three more children learned how to type. Three college students who were expert typists volunteered their services. The six machines were kept busy. In a very short period of time three thousand catalogue cards were typed. At least fifteen hundred were made by the children. Only author and title catalogue cards were made.

While the books were being prepared, every class in the school spent forty-five minutes a week in the library. The librarians were anxious to get the books into circulation. They had a serious problem to face: how can we make children who don't like to read, read? This device was suggested: make the library so attractive that children will want to visit it. When they get in, they may look at the books. The children began to study stories that would be good to tell the younger children. When a child had a story to tell, the other children became an attentive and helpful audience. They suggested

improvements. Then the story was told to a committee composed of excellent story tellers. Sometimes a story was told to the committee first, and after help was given, retold to the class.

The first story told outside the fifth grade classroom was Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats*. It was told to the pre-school children, who sat upon the rug in the principal's office. The principal's beautiful collection of cats and kittens made a lovely background.

The children prepared stories for all the classes below the fifth year. They felt that the older children might not enjoy stories told to them by younger children.

The child librarians were very happy when all the books were ready for circulation in January. They spent the month of January training the children in another class to take over the work of the library.

Now, in the second year of its existence, the Hunter College Elementary School Library is acquiring that attractiveness so eagerly desired by its youthful organizers. Cheerful curtains and healthy plants in pretty containers were donated by the Parents Association. Members of this Association have been very co-operative. Two parents are always present in the library. (The teacher librarian only spends eight periods a week there.) These parent librarians have all the enthusiasm of the children librarians. They, too, want to make all the children like the library. All of the children ranging in age from three and a half to fourteen spend at least one forty-five minute period a week there. Books may be borrowed for a week and renewed for a longer period. No system of fines or penalties has as yet been necessary.

The early stools and ancient tables

have disappeared. They have not as yet been replaced with upholstered chairs and footstools, but comfortable wooden chairs and tables of different heights make the room pleasant.

Perhaps the reader of this article wonders about the "academic progress" of the child librarians. Organizing a library must be good for that. Standardized tests indicate that these pupils have reading abilities far beyond their grade level.

When fifteen hundred books were ready for circulation, the children wrote a book about what they had done. Below are some quotations from the book:

You can't just wish for a library and have it appear all of a sudden. It takes a lot of hard work to build a library, and the Hunter College Elementary School Library was no exception. But we liked the work, and when you like your work you do it well and don't mind doing it.

—*Robert*

When you sit in the library and read the books, do you ever think of what the book and the librarian have to go through?

—*Bettina*

Before you can call it a library, you have to do many things with the books. First of all, you have to put pockets in for cards and to put them in neatly and evenly. You

have to have good penmanship to make them neat. Next is numbering the backs of books. You have to have good penmanship for that, too. Next is shellacing the bindings and pretty covers of the books. And then the typers type catalogue cards. (That's what I like to do best.)

—*Tom*

Lacquering is a lot of fun, especially with the big brush.

—*Lee*

During Children's Book Week, 1941, two delightful events took place in connection with the library. The Parents Association held a three-day Book Fair there. Publishers' advance copies and new books were displayed very attractively. Refreshments were served. One hundred books were sold.

In the lobby of the building, large pictures of story book characters were pasted on the walls. These were made in the seventh and eighth year art classes. The name of a class was printed above each picture. As the children entered they placed under the picture assigned to their class, any books which they wished to donate to the library. A prize of a new book was given to the class donating the largest number of books. This prize was won by the fifth grade.

# Vocabulary for Arithmetic in the Elementary Grades

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**W**HAT MATHEMATICAL terms are used by pupils of the elementary grades in solving arithmetic problems which they meet in their daily living? Data to answer this question were gathered with the co-operation of 77 classroom teachers of Santa Clara County, California. These teachers were carefully selected on the basis of intelligence, teaching skill, and according to their adherence to an activity program of teaching method. Special care was taken in explaining the types and kinds of problems to be observed and recorded and the manner in which the record was to be made.

The teacher was asked to record the words of the child when the problem was observed. There were many problems, however, which could not be recorded in this manner. The teacher then recorded the problem as she would expect to find it in a textbook. The words listed in this study were taken from the recording blank without regard to the person who used them. This makes the data less objective than they would have been had only the words of the pupil been considered. The value of the data is still further decreased when it is considered that personal judgment was a major factor in determining whether a particular term was or was not arithmetical.

An attempt was made to lessen the subjective elements by checking against the arithmetical vocabulary selected by Buswell.<sup>1</sup> The words were also checked

<sup>1</sup> G. T. Buswell, *The Vocabulary of Arithmetic*. Supplementary Educational Monograph, No. 38, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1931, p. 10.

against a list of 500 arithmetical terms given by Buswell, which had been selected from the studies of Hunt,<sup>2</sup> Brooks,<sup>3</sup> and Heightshoe.<sup>4</sup>

The following criteria from Buswell also helped to determine the words which were selected:

1. Words which are technical.
2. Words relating to time, space, or quantity.
3. Terms relating to measurement.
4. Commercial terms.
5. Terms relating to spatial figures.

Because of the necessity for arbitrary selection of arithmetical terms, there were many which were not recorded for this study which would be considered by some writers as arithmetical. For instance, an examination of the data shows that in Buswell's list,<sup>5</sup> such terms as "about," "after," "again," "already," "almost," "always," "and," "clear," and "before" are considered arithmetical. Many such words were undoubtedly omitted in the tabulation of the data in this study. The analysis which is to follow will refer only to those words listed.

The arithmetical terms recorded as they were used by elementary school children are given in Table I. Only those words occurring with a frequency of 10 or more are shown in this table.

<sup>2</sup> A. F. Hunt, "A Comparison of The Vocabularies of Third-Grade Textbooks in Arithmetic and Reading." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Univ. of Chicago, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> S. S. Brooks, "A Study of the Technical and Semi-Technical Vocabulary of Arithmetic." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Ohio State Univ., 1926.

<sup>4</sup> E. A. Heightshoe, "A Comparison of the Vocabularies of Arithmetic and Readers of the Second and Third Grades." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Univ. of Chicago, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., p. 20.

## VOCABULARY FOR ARITHMETIC IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

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The grades were divided into three groups. Group I included the Kindergarten, and grades 1 and 2; group II included grades 3 and 4; and group III included grades 5 and 6.

TABLE I  
FREQUENCY OF USAGE OF ARITHMETIC VOCABULARY  
WORDS IN SOLUTION OF FUNCTIONAL ARITHMETIC

	Groups			Total
	1	2	3	
acre			7	7
A.D.			7	7
amount	3	21	24	
approximate	4	12	16	
area	9	10	19	
auction	9	1	10	
average	7	31	38	
balance			1	10
bank	1	4	5	10
base			10	10
buy	3		7	9
center	2	3	17	22
cents	42	159	226	467
change	2	6	4	12
coin			12	12
cost	2	70	153	255
count	33	9	10	52
date	4	1	10	15
day	20	25	85	130
diameter			25	25
dimensions			34	34
dimes	18	9	3	30
distance	1	3	7	11
divide			5	30
dollar	14	110	247	371
duplicate	2	8	39	49
equal	5	32	245	282
expense			2	11
fare			31	32
feet	13	32	245	290
first	4	10	6	20
fourth	3	5	7	15
gallons			8	10
half	3	32	41	76
height	7	6	40	53
high	4		14	18
hour	2	13	56	71
how long	6		4	10
how many	103	129	100	332
how much	30	63	136	229
inches	37	67	257	361
larger			6	10
length	20	28	98	146
lbs.	4	17	26	47
llbs.			12	12
long	3	3	22	28
measure	11	11	46	68
middle			2	10
miles	1	14	47	62
million			4	6
minute	10	13	31	54
month	7	19	34	60
more	15	4	3	22
nickel	18	8	2	28
number	6	2	2	10
per cent	2	5	37	44

	Groups			Total
	1	2	3	
perimeter				18
penny		21	2	23
pint		1	2	18
P.M.			5	11
pound		2	2	21
price		1	6	32
profit			39	39
proportion			6	14
purpose			1	10
quarter		4	4	13
quarts		1	4	11
quote			5	11
reduce			1	22
sale		2	2	34
saving				11
scale			9	60
second		5	12	37
shortest		5	4	10
small		2		11
space		5	8	34
square feet			3	11
subtract			4	16
tall		6	4	21
tax		2		13
ton			8	21
twice		2	4	14
wage			4	12
whole			8	17
week		8	13	41
weight		3	17	32
width		12	15	90
yards		2	16	80
years		7	23	78

The 50 words occurring most often within their frequencies are given below:

amount	24	long	28
area	19	measure	68
average	38	miles	62
center	22	minutes	54
cents	467	more	22
cost	225	month	60
count	52	nickel	28
day	130	penny	23
diameter	25	per cent	44
dimension	34	pound	21
divide	30	price	32
dollar	371	profit	39
dozen	49	reduce	22
drive	30	sale	34
equal	292	scale	60
fare	32	second	37
foot	290	space	34
half	76	square	79
height	53	tall	21
hour	71	ton	21
how many	332	week	41
how much	229	weight	32
inches	361	width	117
lbs.	47	yards	80
length	146	years	78

How does the vocabulary of this study compare with that of selected courses of study? The courses of study used in comparison were of two groups: (1) a selected group including San Mateo and Pasa-

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dena, California; San Antonio and Fort Worth, Texas; Winona, Minnesota; Virginia State; Utah State; and Denver, Colorado; and (2) the courses of study now being used for the pupils who participated in this investigation, namely those of the city of San Jose and Santa Clara County, California.

The following are words with their frequencies which were used by pupils in Group I, Group II, and Group III in solving problems included in this study but which are not included in the courses of study examined.

## Group I

account	1	how much	30
addition	1	lbs.	4
age	1	measure	11
bank	1	miles	1
buy	2	month	7
change	2	nickel	18
count	33	number	8
cost	2	o'clock	1
couple	2	per cent	2
date	4	pound	2
degree	1	price	2
deposit	1	sale	2
distance	1	score	5
each	1	sell	1
equal	5	size	3
fahrenheit	1	space	5
feet	13	tax	2
figure	1	twice	1
how long	6	weight	3
how many	103	width	12

## Group II

A.M.	1	measurement	5
amount	1	median	1
below zero	1	mixed number	2
centigrade	3	pair	1
cheap	6	portion	3
coin	12	quota	4
decade	2	section	12
diagonal	2	shilling	1
fraction	5	standard	4
freezing point	1		

## Group III

A.D.	7	express charge	2
altitude	1	isosceles	1
angle	1	llbs.	26
assessment	4	nautical miles	2
auction	2	perimeter	18
balance	2	period	13
B.C.	6	perpendicular	3
century	3	profit	39
circumference	2	purchase	9
compute	3	radius	5
credit	1	ratio	2
deduct	4	receipt	5
deficit	2	refund	5
diameter	2	round trip	2
discount	7	savings	11
duplicate	2	statistics	2
elliptical	3	tally	1
ell	2	valuation	3
equidistant	1	worth	3

The investigator feels that he has made his stand concerning the value of this vocabulary clear but again he repeats that these lists are not recommendations for inclusion in the course of study in arithmetic but suggestions which may form the basis for further investigations.

# Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1941

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## PART II\* SUMMARY

FOR SOME TIME it has been the policy of *The Elementary English Review* to invite colleges and universities that carry on graduate work to participate in research on "Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English." An acquaintance with back issues of *The Elementary English Review* will reveal changes and trends in the field of research in the language arts.

It has been my privilege to assist with this study in the past two years—1938-1939, and 1939-1940. The titles and abstracts which have appeared in the reports do not represent a complete record, but rather the responses that have come as a result of the invitation for participation. Abstracts have been given as they have come from the graduate schools except in a few cases where it became necessary to shorten the reports because of limited space for publication. In other instances I have prepared abstracts of theses that have reached us through library exchange, and I have attempted to express the point of view of the one who did the research.

The editor of *The Review* joins me in an expression of appreciation for the splendid co-operation of participating graduate schools.

### *Comments about the Studies.*

The fifty-two studies reported fall within the following groupings:

Reading 15  
Language Skills 13

Language Concepts	8
Free choice of books	5
Radio	3
Comics	2
Social Backgrounds	2
Creative Writing	2
Manuscript Writing	1
Spelling	1

Numerous changes have taken place in the fields of communication. There has been a rapid growth in library facilities, books, and bulletins. Knowledge and understanding relative to ways in which children grow and learn have been greatly extended. New advances in the art of communication have opened up marvelous techniques for exchange of ideas, and a corresponding possibility for misuse of such techniques. Many possibilities for the enrichment of living have been revealed, but too often they have developed into passive acceptance of the new without critical evaluation and re-direction of uses.

There is too much evidence in the studies that the point of departure has been the teaching of a subject and not the function of English as an art in the total field of communication and enrichment of living. Too often our teacher-training organizations represent a corresponding subject approach and do not reveal relatedness in larger wholes. We cannot justify the hours devoted to research unless the problem is one of real concern and the study helps in bringing

\* Part I appeared in the November and December, 1941 and January, 1942 issues.

about a significant change in present practice. Some graduate research is important enough that the student makes a contribution in a situation where the problem is a pressing one for solution.

The studies do reveal some advance in the probing of issues that have closer identification with life values.

#### *Research in Reading.*

Reading continues to be the area of major concern. Ten studies deal directly with the improvement of reading in specific school situations: *Altman* reports a diagnostic study of the reading of the fifth grade pupils; *Decker* makes a study of reading habits and interests of fifth grade pupils; *Fuller* presents a study of remedial reading in an elementary school in Kansas; *Gore* gives a comparison of the reading achievement of Spanish-American pupils and American born pupils in a school in Denver; *Harmon* studies a program of reading in grades two, three, and four in Minneapolis; *Kier* reports the effectiveness of extensive reading in educational experience units; *Lippenberger* makes a study to find out how children's concepts in biological sciences are modified by reading; *Norman* works on the administration of a program of improvement in reading in a small school system; *Thomas* plans diagnostic and remedial instruction in the third grades of a school system in Kansas; *O'Leary* shows the gains made through a program of remedial instruction.

The conclusions in these studies seem to support the hypotheses that many children in our schools have difficulty with reading and that a well planned program of enrichment brings about a marked improvement in reading ability.

I should like to suggest at this point that we might question our original programs in reading. From these many studies can we not find factors which are

conducive to a better approach and reconstruct our programs before we have so many remedial cases?

Five of the studies in reading are concerned with the evaluation of readers and reading tests: *Michaelis* suggests standards for the selection of basal readers; *Prosser* reports a semantic study of certain first grade books; *Campbell* makes a study of word group frequency in school readers; *Cavin* analyzes 27 intermediate grade reading tests; *Daniels* evaluates informal reading tests.

Five other studies deal with the recreational aspects of the reading program: *Lisor* gives standards for the selection and use of inexpensive books; *Thompson* makes a study of enrichment versus analysis methods of teaching word mastery; *Olson* compares a program of free reading with a program of remedial reading; *Cunningham* reports a study of children's choices of books at public libraries; *Warfel* shows sex differences in choices made in recreational reading.

#### *Research in Language Skills and Meanings.*

Another area which claims attention is that of the development of language skills and of the broader language arts programs.

*Adams, Barghahn, Burns, Foster, Kallsen, Oldham, Otto, Savage, Schindhelm, Spencer, Stewart, Swanson, Tripp* have studies on the development of language skills.

*Crosscup* makes a survey and analysis of methods and techniques for fostering growth of meaning vocabulary; *Dawe* reports a study of the effect of educational programs upon language development; *Laird* makes suggestions for the development of curriculum materials; *Katharine Barber* suggests poetry selections for children of six or under; *Somny* plans a special course for dramatization in the

elementary schools; *Stauffer* studies the factors involved in conserving and directing the spontaneous language of young children; *Cash* presents a special spelling list for the elementary language course of study; *Giles* makes a study of manuscript writing in the rural schools of Iowa; and *Wickard* works out a manual for the teaching of creative writing.

#### *The Radio and Children's Choices in out-of-school Experiences.*

Three studies show how much time many of the children of today devote to out-of-school listening to radio programs. The three investigators reveal similar findings in the large amount of listening time at home and the little influence of the school in the selections made by the children. The studies are concluded with suggestions for school guidance. *Goudy* reports a study in an elementary school in West Virginia; *Lohmeyer*, a study in Iowa; and *Peak*, a study in Kansas.

#### *Research on Comics for Children.*

Two studies deal with the comics and the children's reactions to them. *Conrad* from Temple University and *Smith* from Ohio University make studies of the newspaper cartoons, the time devoted to them, and the interpretations which children give.

#### *Social Relationships Shown in Children's Letters.*

*Wasson* shows the extent and nature of children's understanding of social relationships with others as revealed in their letters and conversation.

#### *Suggested Fields for Future Studies.*

1. The nature of normal language growth in out-of-school experiences of young children.

2. Social and economic factors involved in variations found in language expression.
3. Language differences and similarities of children of low and high intelligence and suggestions for planning learning situations.
4. Critical use of books, pamphlets, radio, movies, recordings, pictures, plays, trips and interviews as means to a fuller and richer learning experience.
5. Study of the development of discrimination and insight in reading books.
6. Reading needs in modern society and a school program that functions.
7. Creating reading materials in keeping with community needs in certain underprivileged areas.
8. Relative values of functional writing as an approach to the development of skill and motivated writing assignments.
9. Co-operative experiences in state planning to help solve in-service problems of teachers in the field of language arts.
10. Provision of adequate library facilities in a variety of community situations.
11. Developments in solving speech difficulties.
12. Reading experiences of teachers who are responsible for broadening the reading experiences of children.
13. Extending opportunities for exchange of books, magazines, films, slides and other learning materials which will open up far greater opportunities for rural teachers.
14. Newer ways to study and interpret learnings in the language arts.

# Bodily Activity And Creative Dramatics

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**W**E ARE in a progressive school of 1941. The class in, "did you say, *creative dramatics?*" is in progress. The pianist is playing soothing passages from the classics, while the teacher is standing near the stage directing and guiding the children as they lie on the floor of the stage, seemingly in a state of relaxation of their entire bodies. Now and then she calls the attention of a boy or girl to arms that appear too rigid or to leg or neck muscles that are still too tense and cramped. Then she begins the first step in learning actively to control the muscles: "Think about each thing that you want to do. Turn your head gradually. Move your shoulder very slowly, keeping your arm relaxed. Next move your right leg up and over the other very slowly, making a complete turn over."

We are curious. What has this to do with creative dramatics? We watch the actions of these elementary school children and note the progress that they are making in learning to use and control their bodies. Later, through free rhythmical response to music, they begin to co-ordinate their muscles more naturally. Even though some of the older pupils seem inhibited at first, they lose all this self-consciousness in reacting to the accent and the phrasing of the music. We observe, too, that by following this with large rhythmic movements of a set pattern and by adding creative and dramatic rhythms, creative dramatics is the resulting product—a product all the children's

own, with their own bodies as the instrument of expression.

We do some reflecting thinking. By this method the whole approach is made through the growth in the control of the body simultaneously with inner growth and this inner growth is the essence of the creative. The child's body has become a flexible agent of expression. He sees other children trying to express themselves, and with a growing, critical mind he is able to judge quite discreetly as to whether the thought, feeling and emotion were well expressed. He offers suggestions, or perhaps he gives his interpretation of a character. In this way he develops his imagination, poise, self-reliance and spontaneous thinking. In addition the development of this bodily control has a direct bearing on creative activity.

As the child feels certain emotions or experiences new thoughts, he is anxious to express them. As the freedom in activity increases, the problem before the teacher is to know how to draw out the creative impulse. By beginning with bodily activities, their improvement, their meaning, their usefulness in the interpretation of human nature (as in the dramatization of a story or real experience) or expression, the teacher has set up an environment which will stimulate creative ability. In his book, *Creative Youth*, Hughes Mearns says this about the creative impulse: "It cannot be taught; indeed, it cannot even be summoned; it may only be permitted."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mearns, Hughes—*Creative Youth*.

Once the environment is set up, it is the problem of the teacher, consciously on her part, but unconsciously on the part of her pupils, to "keep the creative impulses moving toward the right productive ends."<sup>2</sup>

In the child-centered school of today modern educational leaders no longer question the worth of physical education. It has proven its merit not only as an aid to bodily development, but also as a means of self-expression and emotional control. It is not a very complex matter, then, to integrate physical education with creative dramatics. It was Kilpatrick and Dewey<sup>3</sup> who first declared that an education which recognized the mind alone or even the mind and hands, was not the true education. The whole child must be developed if he was to reach his maximum growth. By means of actual first-hand experience along lines of his natural interests his capacity for creative self-expression should be developed. This relatively new idea is permeating our school system today. Because dramatics is based upon a very strong natural instinct and because it has unusual possibilities for creative self-expression it has a high place in an alive and growing school.

Also, since creative dramatics involves the use of speech as well as movement, it is of the greatest importance that the body be under control, for we speak with the whole body. Without a controlled body a controlled voice is impossible. Curry says, "No man can cramp even his hand or foot, or throw his body out of poise without more or less perverting his tone, or bring all parts into sympathetic relations without improving the vibrations of his voice."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ward, Winifred—*Creative Dramatics*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Woolbert, C. H. & Weaver, A. T.—*Better Speech*, p. 305.

Concomitantly, in agreement, are Woolbert and Weaver who state that "the more deeply we feel about things the more active we become all over our bodies."

This is true whether the activity is seen by others or whether it is hidden from the eye." A gesture, for example, seldom is effective unless it originates in or is an integral part of a general attitude or activity of the body.

If in pantomiming a character from literature a child feels like him he will act like him and with this will come a better understanding of the character and of human nature. Through constant practice in rhythms, pantomimes, and creative dramatic activities the child so trains his muscles that gradually his body becomes an asset in acting rather than a liability.

We are convinced. Bodily activity and its control are basically essential to creative dramatics.

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# Editorial

## DEFENSE

WHEN," asked John Stuart Mill some eighty years ago, "will education consist, not in repressing any mental faculty or power, from the uncontrolled action of which danger is apprehended, but in training up to its proper strength the corrective and antagonistic power?"

The educational philosophy implicit in this question is a difficult one to apply. Nevertheless, it behooves us to give it serious thought today.

For some years, now, there has been a tendency in educational theory and practice to prescribe, to soften, discard, break down all obstacles. Do children find the verses of the Cary sisters tiresome? Out with them! Is it hard for some pupils to learn to read? Give all children stories written in the fewest possible words. There are, perhaps, educational allergies. Restrict the diet, then! Keep children away from failure, from effort, from disappointment. They must like school.

Inconsistently enough, this not infrequently goes hand-in-hand with the conviction that the school must "create real-life situations." This is, of course, gross self-deception. Real-life situations may be discovered and used, but not created at will; and veritable real-life situations are sown with failure, disappointment, and difficulty.

Neither tenet - the restriction of educational material to that which is easy and pleasant, not the spurious "situation" which deceive no one, can train up to their necessary strength the defensive

powers that adults, no longer sheltered by solicitous schools, need so desperately in this hard-pressed civilization.

It is happily true, of course, that our educators today are not all so deceived.

There was a genuine real-life situation in the Hunter College Elementary School (see Miss Carney's paper, page 59) and a clear-sighted teacher recognized it and turned it to good educational use. Those fifth-graders tramped eight blocks to a library! They typed fifteen hundred catalog cards, and prepared as many books for the shelves. They learned the Decimal classification, and the use of the card-catalog. Mill himself would admit that such an undertaking toughened mental and spiritual fibre, and built up powers of resistance to unforeseen and unguessed difficulties.

Miss Gunderson opened the whole rich treasure of the English language to her second-graders when she encouraged them to seek out "warm" words, cross words, happy words, and "scary" ones. No boundaries here! One can believe that these children will tackle hard new problems with greater zest and vigor for this experience.

Such work as this is education in its soundest and best sense. It strengthens the individual, and so the whole of society. When education moves forward, building up to their proper strength the defensive powers, there will be fewer educational invalids, and fewer social invalids as well.

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